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By-Reddoch, James W.

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Student unrest is caused by a lack of compatibility between the educational goals and objectives of students and the goals and objectives of educational institutions. Brief definitions of students and organizations are given. Students are categorized into three types: (1) "curricula-oriented" or interested only in obtaining a degree, (2) "involved" or interested in total campus participation, and (3) "dissentient" or interested in pure academia. The "involved" and "dissentient" students cause the unrest. If a university is to cope successfully with the problems of student unrest, the numerous programs and resulting regulations and policies must contribute to the student's educational programs. The "involved" student provides "healthy" unrest, providing impetus for needed change. The "dissentient" student provides dangerous unrest that can result in violence. The university must then act in self-defense and sever the student-institutional relationship. The handling of this decision is discussed, with suggestions given for the student, the university community and the university administration. (SJ)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF STUDENT UNREST IN THE UNIVERSITY

prepared by
James W. Reddoch

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My charge, as a member of this panel, is to introduce the subject of solving the problem of student unrest in the university. My approach to this topic will, no doubt, be colored by my personal experience and background. I am Dean of Student Affairs at a combination state university and landgrant college with an enrollment of approximately 18,000 students, but my academic training and experience have been in the field of Business Administration. I mention this because my approach to solving problems is based on my Business Administration training which suggests that considerable attention be given to precisely stating a problem before seeking a solution. Thus, I intend to use the better part of my time to state the causes of student unrest and to discuss the institutional framework within which this phenomenon takes place.

The fact that there is student unrest on college and university campuses cannot be denied. The actions of students on college and university campuses have been voluminously reported by the news media in recent months. This press coverage has tended to emphasize student feelings about what is wrong with society in general and colleges and universities in particular. Often overlooked is the fact that the system of higher education now existing in the United States is the best educational system yet devised by any civilization to provide opportunities for higher education to every citizen with the capability and desire to seek a college degree. The percentage of high school graduates entering college is at an all-time high as is the total number of students enrolled in colleges and universities.

If we have student unrest on campus, then the first step toward solving the problem is raising the question, "Why are students restless?" Or perhaps this should be the second question with the first being, "What is a student?" For purposes of this discussion, I shall use the term "student" to include all

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individuals who have established an official relationship with a college or university by registering for one or more courses.

A brief look at the nature of organizations may help understand the basic institution-student relationship. Organizations are created and maintained by people as means of accomplishing objectives that they cannot accomplish alone. Once an organization is created, it, too, has its own distinct objectives or goals. Each individual in society has his own objectives, goals, and desires. People join or associate themselves with an organization because they feel that the organization can assist them in accomplishing their personal objectives, goals, and desires. If an individual's objectives and the institution's objectives are identical or compatible, the probability of a successful relationship is much greater than if the individual's objectives and the institutional objectives are opposite or non-compatible. If a person voluntarily joins an organization as a means of furthering his own personal objectives, he should be willing to accept the organization's corporate leadership as the medium to best accomplishing mutual goals. He, of course, should have a voice in determining how goals will be pursued. The organization should establish an orderly means by which members may take part in determining how goals and objectives will be pursued.

The organization, in the case of a public university, is established by the people of a political subdivision, usually a city or a state. The legislation creating the university usually outlines its purpose in rather general terms. The implementation of programs calculated to accomplish this stated purpose is usually left to the governing board, administrators, and faculty who voluntarily associate themselves with the institution in these capacities and, hence, become members of the organization. Individuals also join a university as students in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by these programs. In a real sense, a college or university is a membership organization.

Since we are concerned with student unrest, we should examine the institution-student relationship in terms of compatibility of educational objectives. I dare

say that most students feel that their basic educational goals are compatible with those of the educational institution they have chosen to join as a student. It is in the area of how to best accomplish these mutual goals that discord often arises. Out of this discord grows student unrest. The general cause of student unrest, as I see it, results from a marked disparity between the student's concept of how he can best accomplish his educational goals and objectives and his chosen university's program for accomplishing its educational goals and objectives.

If we categorize students on the basis of what they hope to gain by attending a university and on the basis of their approach to reaching these goals, we will find that three groupings of students emerge.

The first grouping consists of students who, often by necessity, take a very limited view of what is involved in "getting a college education." In fact, most of these students would tend to state this process as "getting a college degree." This is not said in a derogatory way but as a fact of life because many view the educational process in strictly an academic context. These students simply want the opportunity to participate in an academic program in order to fulfill the requirements for the particular academic degree that they have set as a goal. This student usually has little time for extracurricular activities since he devotes most of his available time to pursuing his educational goals. Often this available time is limited by employment or other off-campus responsibilities. If he is a member of a campus organization, it will usually be a professional or honorary group. Students in this grouping tend to be fairly well satisfied with the university and its educational program because they probably chose the institution with care or at least joined the institution with their eyes open. They tend to accept the university's corporate judgment in the matter of curricula planning and extracurricular rules and regulations. Hence, students in this category are not normally restless students. We will designate students that fall in this category as "curricula-oriented" students.

The student in the second category is basically satisfied with the educational opportunities offered by his chosen university, but he tends to have a broader view of what constitutes educational opportunities. To him, there is more to going to college than just academic work. He views participation in the total life of the campus as a part of the educational process. He looks for opportunities to participate in the extracurricular and co-curricula programs of the campus. Being an elected officer in a student organization may be as meaningful in accomplishing his educational goals as making high grades in required academic courses. His zest for being a part of the total life of the campus leads him to a desire to participate in the decision-making process that affects his life on campus and particularly his life outside the classroom. Since he is a responsible individual, he is, of course, willing to take part in this decision-making process in an orderly fashion. We will designate the student in this category as the "involved" student.

The third category of students is made up of individuals who find that, basically, their educational goals and objectives are not compatible with their chosen university. These students feel that the university community should strip away all the traditional extracurricular activities and concern itself with what they call pure academic matters. These students would replace the university's concern with what they call "mickey mouse" activities, e.g., student government, fraternities, and other activity programs with a direct university involvement in the social problems of the larger society. Since most universities do have an involved system of student self-government, organizations, and various and sundry other social and cultural programs, they have found it necessary to establish rules and regulations to govern this phase of the institution-student relationship. When students in this category assert their feelings, they come into conflict with these rules and regulations. Students in this grouping, we will describe as the "dissentient" student.

On any university campus today, there are some curricula-oriented students, some involved students, and a few dissentient students. In general, there is

little unrest among students in the first category. There will be unrest among the latter two categories. A healthy unrest is present among the involved students that can provide the impetus for needed change in the "how" of best accomplishing educational objectives. A potentially dangerous type of unrest that can do violence to a university and its educational program exists among the dissentient students.

Since my thesis is that student unrest is caused by a lack of compatibility between the educational goals and objectives of students and the goals and objectives of educational institutions, before we proceed with a discussion of how to deal with unrest, we must first look at the non-student side of this equation - the university. There is little basis for disagreement as to the fundamental purpose of a university, but on no university campus will you find a consensus among faculty and administrators as to the "how" of accomplishing the institution's stated objective. However, at any given moment of time, there is an on-going program with regulations, rules, policies, practices, and procedures calculated to aid in the accomplishment of the institution's objectives. These requirements embody the university's corporate judgment as to how to best accomplish its objectives. This "how" of accomplishing objectives should be, and on most campuses is, subject to constant review and change. In fulfilling its general purpose, a university is, in a sense an agent of change in that it teaches that which is true and, to do this with any degree of certainty, it must constantly seek the truth. The pragmatist in me leads me to add that the university should also encourage the use of that which is true, i.e., valuable knowledge, to the service of mankind. In fact, it seems to me that a university should have, as one of its objectives, educating people to live with and accept change. A true university, then, must be committed to the idea of change - change not only resulting from the seeking of new knowledge but also change in the "how" of pursuing all goals of the university. Thus, a university must be concerned with its governance practices. By governance practices, I mean all the regulations, rules, policies, practices, and procedures established to govern the academic and extracurricular life on the campus. This

concern is important here because it is out of the conflicts between individual goals and institutional goals that unrest results.

If a university is to successfully deal with student unrest that grows out of this conflict of interest, its faculty and administration must be in a position to know that this body of requirements does contribute to the accomplishment of the university's educational objectives and, as the student states it, assuring that the goals are "relevant." If any good is to come from this siege of student unrest, it will be the introspection that it will force on universities. The standard that I would suggest for use in introspection is that of asking the question of each regulation, rule, policy, procedure, and practice, "Does it contribute to or distract from the institution's educational objectives?" This should not be construed to mean that a university should only be concerned with purely academic matters. For example, if a state university reaches the decision that the operation of on-campus dormitories will contribute to the accomplishment of its educational goals, then that university should construct dormitories. Once these buildings are constructed, the university will find that rules to govern in-dormitory life will be necessary. Dormitory rules, then, although several steps removed from classroom teaching, meet the test of being necessary to accomplish the educational objectives of the university and, hence, are justified.

If this introspection is to be effective, it must be orderly, and it must involve all members of the university, including students. The need for order would dictate that a university establish and publicize a procedure by which requests for change or reviews of existing regulations would be made.

In summary, a university has stated purposes and objectives. The administration and faculty are charged with and are responsible for formulating programs that will accomplish these objectives. The implementation of programs inevitably results in a body of university regulations, rules, policies, practices, and procedures. If a university is to cope successfully with the problem of student unrest, it must be sure that these requirements do, in fact, contribute

to its educational program. In reaching this judgment, the university should be free to take as broad, or narrow, a view of education as is desired by its faculty and administration and approved by its governing board.

The point was made earlier that it is the lack of compatibility between individual student goals and institutional goals that results in student unrest. We have discussed this, first, from the student's viewpoint and then from the institution's viewpoint. Now, let us put the two together so that we may see in more detail how this unrest is manifest. We can best do this by looking at the likelihood of students in the three categories, discussed earlier, living in harmony with the regulations the university considers necessary for its proper functioning.

The curriculum-oriented student is not likely to have much difficulty in living with the requirements established by the university. In all probability, he is only concerned with those requirements that relate specifically to curricula matters.

The involved student is a little different. Since to him the educational process involves his whole life, he is concerned not only with curricula matters but also with the regulations and rules that affect his life outside the classroom. The involved student will raise legitimate questions about the relevance of extracurricular rules to the educational process; however, since he has a broad view of education, he is susceptible to the logic of what is needed of a program based on a broad concept of education. His involvement in the university's self-governance program will tend to lead him to use established procedures for making his desires known. Many of these students are bright, level-headed, mature past their years, young men and women who can bring a fresh new insight to the decision-making process. A university will do well to allow these students a voice in the governance of the institution, a voice consistent with the competency possessed by these members of the university community. The "how" of this participation will vary from campus to campus, but these students should be

encouraged to participate with the assurance that their suggestions will be judged on their merits and not on the basis of from whence the suggestion originated. A university should have no fear of accepting a suggestion for change if the change is judged sound on its own merits.

It is from students in the third group - the dissentient students - that the university can expect the most difficulty in dealing with unrest. This is true because the differences between the objectives of these students and the institution's objectives are fundamental and grave. The dissentient student's view of the university's educational function is so narrow that he would limit the institutional relationship to what he calls pure academics. Even here, he reserves the right for students to be substantially involved in curricula formulation, teacher recruitment and hiring, and staff promotions. His object is to materially alter the traditional institution-student relationship in favor of a dominant student position. Students espousing this viewpoint are often able to rally support from among the involved students on individual issues by including in their campaign for change issues of interest to the involved student, e.g., dress standards, dormitory rules, fraternity regulations.

A common tactic of students in this group is to champion the cause of drastic change in the name of academic freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and other principles cherished by the university community. This approach often gains support from some faculty members, but it also often foments disorder, the antithesis of the true academic environment. In fact, disorder is one of their major weapons. Although these students do not use what most universities consider legal means in making known their wishes and/or demands, they seek the protection of the law - both campus "law" and the law of the land to uphold their right to be heard.

The dissentient student's view of education is in conflict with the corporate position as established by the administration and faculty of most universities as to institutional purposes and what is necessary to accomplish these purposes. Thus, student unrest and conflict is inevitable.

When attempting to reach a position on how to deal with the dissentient student, perhaps we should remember the words of Emerson, "Discontent is the want of self-reliance; it is infirmity of will."

Once the university has reached the corporate judgment that the dissentient students on its campus represent a real and present danger to the successful accomplishment of its objectives, the decision of how to deal with this type of student unrest is simple. The university must do what any individual must and can legally do when his life, property, or reputation is endangered. The university, in short, must practice self-defense. The university can practice self-defense by a severing of the institution-student relationship of the offending student. As a membership organization, the university must reserve the right to rescind membership for any member for just cause. Just cause implies a due process procedure to determine if the university is justified in removing a member. In exercising the right of self-defense, the university should be prudent and, if possible, compassionate.

The severing of the institution-student relationship is not as harsh as it may sound at first hearing. Once a university has reached a resolute position - be it a general position or a position on a specific issue - it has no choice but to stand fast. To do otherwise would be to allow a militant minority to change the character of the institution from that desired by the majority of its members, i.e., faculty, administrators, and students. The dissentient student does have a choice. He can choose to join another institution with educational goals more in keeping with his own.

The university should also attempt to handle its problems of student unrest within the framework of the university community if possible - that is, assistance from courts or civil authority should be used as a last resort. However, when student unrest takes the form of mob violence or other civil disobedience in which the property and lives are threatened or the rights of other members of the university community are being denied, the university is justified in calling for

any assistance necessary to restore order and to protect the university's rights, property, and program.

It should be remembered that after any physical confrontation involving students and the university that a post-mortem will follow. I have read some that have been published and distributed widely; others are informal and internal. These post-mortems attempt to determine if the university's administration and faculty exercised the leadership it should have in the days, weeks, and months that preceded the confrontation. Those of us representing universities should resolve that if we have a confrontation on our campus growing out of student unrest that we will go into it with "clean hands" - that is, that we have honestly faced up to the causes of student unrest which could result in a physical confrontation and violence.

My formula, then, for dealing with student unrest may be summarized as follows. The university must put its house in order by deciding what is necessary to accomplish its objectives. The house must be kept in order by constant review. Within this framework, the university is justified in establishing rules and regulations necessary to provide the desired institution-student relationship. Students wishing to question the reasonableness and appropriateness of these rules and regulations should not only have the right to be heard but also the right to be heard through an established and well publicized procedure. If the student is still dissatisfied, he, as a citizen, will always have the opportunity of recourse to an appropriate court. Failing here, the student has the option of voluntarily severing his relationship with the university and joining an institution with an approach to educational goals in keeping with his own views. In the case of students who choose not to follow an orderly and prescribed procedure in questioning the University's corporate position, the university must take the initiative in severing the institution-student relationship.

Although the formula is simple, the working of the formula is difficult. During the question and answer period, I will attempt to relate my position to specific situations.